

NATURAL SETTING

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CHAPTER THREE — NATURAL SETTING. (POc ahontas County )

Roacos W, Brown Arbovale WVA

Part 1

Sept-27 -1940

(Sec B)

From the stand point of climate Pocahontas might be divided in two parts , that is, highlands and valleys or lowlands. Being a vary mountainous country with high elevations and located on the western side of the main Alleghenies, it is subject to severe winters. the valleys , however , being protected on either side, have less severe winters. During the summer months the weather is ideal seldom averaging over 70 degrees Fahrenheit during July the warmest month of the year.

✓ Because of the wide range in elevation and the varied directions at which the mountains and valleys lie, climatic differences within the County are great. Through the western and southern parts, the winters are cold, and the summers are cool with relatively few hot days; the lower Greenbrier River Valley and the ridge and Valley country to the east have less severe winters and considerably higher summer temperatures. With a few exceptions the nights are cool and ideal for sleeping.

The results of killing frosts have been observed in a few places as late as June 20, and considerable frost damage to tender vegetation have been observed even in July and August. <sup>Fog</sup> Fog along the large streams and valleys in the spring and fall often prevents the severe frost damage that occurs in the adjoining uplands.

The direction of the prevailing air currents and their modifications by physiography often give a temperature variation of as much as 10 degrees within a distance of one or two miles. The Climate of Pocahontas County is typical of a great upland mass and characterized by a range of temperature that is not affected by nearness to the sea or other modifying influences.

Since the virgin forest timber is practically , all taken out of Pocahontas - County , the winds have become stronger ; the air tends to move lengthwise of the long valley of the Greenbrier River , and the winds are deflected by the topography of the country so that at times they blow at right angles to their normal course Winds in general blow harder at high altitudes , at night, and in the winter time,

Cyclones are not a common occurrence in Pocahontas County and very few wind storms and floods that are out of the ordinary.

According to the Weather Bureau station at Marlinton, situated at an elevation of 2131 feet, the annual ( average ) rainfall is 47.26 inches, with average depth of snow 33.7 inches, and the mean temperature is 48.1 F Degrees

This, however, is not representative of conditions in the plateau sections of the north-eastern part of the County. The Pickens station in Randolph County is more indicative of the north-eastern part of Pocahontas County, it shows an average annual rainfall of more than 60 inches and a snowfall of 100 inches.

The rainfall is well distributed through the year . It is greatest during the year, summer, when needed for growing crops and pasture, and least in fall and winter

The heaviest snow fall is usually in January and February.

The average frost-free period reported at Marlinton, is  $4\frac{1}{2}$  months, between May 16 and October 1st The last killing frost reported was June 17 th and the earliest sept 6th. ( these figures are quoted from the Soil Survey of Pocahontas County issued Feb 1938 ).

It has always been a common saying and belief, by the old farmers of Pocahontas County that the East Wind will kill their buck-wheat or injure it to the extent that it wont fill, make straw but not much grain.

Generally the snows are very heavy on the Allegheny mountains, the Back Allegheny and Cheat Mountains; The Staunton and Parkersburg turnpike crosses the Allegheny mountains between Monterey Virginia , and Travelers Repose , and crosses the Back Allegheny and Cheat Mountain between Durbin and Huttonsville of Randolph County, these points where the Pike crosses the mountains which is at an elevation of approximately 4000 feet will drift full of snow , and until recent years the traffic and U.S.Mails would be held up for several weeks on account of the heavy drifting snows . In the olden times when the traffic and transportation was done by the horse and buggy , and the four and six horse wagons were common to the people of Pocahontas County., traffic would be blocked by the snow drifts on the Allegheny mountain, and the Cheat mountain the greater part of the winter time.

But of recent times when the State Road Commission is equipped with the modern snow plows , and by the construction of the modern snow fences, along the sections that are apt to drift up, the roads are thereby kept free from the snow drifts ; and every day that it snows, the snow plows are kept running both day and night to keep the roads open for the public in general.

About once a year during the winter months , there will be heavy sleet which frequently will stop the traffic , but not longer than one or two days at a time

No other weather conditions that are out of the ordinary are perceptible in the matter of shifting the County,s economic welfare.

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It appears to be an authentic fact that since the Virgin Forest of Pocahontas County have been cut out and especially the famous White Pine trees, that the early killing frost and the late killing frost are not so prevalent. Late killing frosts in the spring and early killing frosts in the fall made farming a precarious source subsistence to early settlers.

As late as 1810, the fact that corn would ripen on Marlins Bottom ( now Marlinton ) sufficiently to make meal was of great interest to the surrounding settlers. Cultivating patches of buckwheat, corn, beans, and potatoes comprised most of the pioneer farming enterprise for supplementing supplies of game and fish.

The staple agricultural products are corn, oats, wheat, hay, potatoes, apples, peaches, grapes, and rye, in their approximate order named.

Of recent years it is found that Alfalfa has proven to be a successful crop. Soy-Beans have proven to be a successful crop. And Barley has been experimented with in the last few years by the farmers and found it to be a splendid paying crop.

Sweet potatoes, Watermellons, Peanuts, have been tried out, but have been abandoned on the account of climatic conditions.

No industries of any nature have been established in Pocahontas County that have been proven to be unsuitable.

Climatological facts can best be gained by examining the records of the past years . The County is particularly fortunate in having a public-spirited man in the person of Mr H.S.Sutton of Arbovale<sup>h</sup> who has kept the Cooperative Observers Meterological record ~~parfbetly~~ since the year of 1924 to August 1940 and has never missed a day in the period of 16 years .

The public-spirited citizen Mr, S.L.Brown who was County Clerk about 40 years, kept practically a complete record of rainfall, snowfall, and temperature , from 18<sup>93</sup> 93 to 1927 . at Marlinton.

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Monthly, Annual, and Mean Snowfall in Inches at  
Marlinton. S.L. Brown, Observer.

(3)

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
1893									
1893	M	18.5	1.0	.....	.....	.....	2.5	3.0	.....
1894	6.0	18.0	1.0	T	.....	.....	5.0	M	.....
1895	M	8.0	10.5	1.0	.....	.....	0.5	9.8	.....
1896	1.1	3.1	14.2	1.5	.....	.....	3.0	2.0	24.9
1897	10.0	13.5	6.0	T	.....	.....	1.0	4.0	34.5
1898	9.0	3.0	6.0	2.5	.....	.....	3.5	11.7	35.7
1899	4.0	27.5	3.0	T	.....	.....	T	8.0	42.5
1900	T	7.0	21.0	T	.....	.....	1.5	2.5	32.0
1901	9.3	1.5	0.5	.....	.....	.....	M	M	.....
19.2	M	M	M	M	.....	1.0	1.5	11.0	.....
1903	M	M	M	M	T	.....	3.0	12.0	.....
1904	10.5	10.5	M	T	T	.....	M	M	.....
1905	M	M	T	1.0	.....	.....	M	M	.....
1906	M	3.5	26.5	.....	.....	.....	M	M	.....
1907	M	M	M	.....	.....	.....	M	M	.....
1908	M	32.0	M	M	.....	T	7.0	20.0	.....
1909	M	M	M	M	.....	.....	M	M	.....
1910	5.0	9.0	4.0	.....	.....	T	T	15.0	33.0
1911	9.0	3.5	6.5	.....	.....	.....	0.2	1.5	20.7
1912	11/5	6.0	5.5	.....	.....	.....	8.0	31.0	
1913	4.0	1.0	T	1.0	.....	.....	3.0	2.5	11.5
1914	14.6	20.0	15.5	.....	.....	.....	M	M	.....
1915	19.0	T	6.0	0.5	.....	T	2.0	2.0	34.5
1916	10.5	6.5	7.0	10.0	.....	.....	.....	14.5	48.5
1917	8.5	6.0	2.5	T	.....	3.0	T	18.0	38.0

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
1918	31.0	5.0	T	8.5	.....		T	1.5	46.0
1919	8.5	7.5	T	T	.....		0.5	6.5	23.0
1920	1.0	5.0	0.5	2.0	.....		M.	2.5	M
1921	9.0	10.0	T	T	.....	T	T	5.5	24.5
1922	15.0	16.0	1.5	T	.....	T	0.5	1.0	34.0
1923	9.5	9.0	2.0	0	1.5	.....	T	1.0	23.0
1924	2.0	9.0	3.5	2.0	.....		5.0	T	21.5
1925	23.5	T	6.0	T	...	13.0	T	T	42.5
1926	<del>11.5</del> 9.5	16.5	.....	6.0	.....	T	T	1.5	45.0
1927	4.5	7.0	1.0	0.5	.....	.....	2.0	1.0	16.0
Means	9.5	9.2	5.8	1.2	T	0.6	1.6	6.3	31.5

M indicates report missing.

T indicates trace. *an amount less than 0.01*

Not snowfall recorded in June, July, August, September, 1893-1927.



Monthly, Annual, and Mean Precipitation in inches at Marlinton.

S. L. Brown Observer

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
1893	.....	5.49	1.72	2.91	4.47	5.80	.....	.....	...	5.32	1.99	1.91	.....
1894	1.81	3.39	1.84	2.06	...	2.69	.....	.....	...	.....	1.84	.....	.....
1895	.....	1.05	1.46	4.41	2.40	.....	.....	.....	.....	1.35	1.82	4.14	.....
1896	1.45	5.26	6.99	1.82	3.74	7.71	7.80	3.28	4.88	1.22	4.93	1.08	45.76
1897	2.17	5.88	5.21	2.85	7.06	5.59	5.65	2.74	0.80	0.95	4.08	4.64	47.62
1898	5.61	1.47	5.23	4.32	5.27	7.50	6.76	9.15	3.33	4.54	3.85	3.71	60.70
1899	3.26	5.23	6.28	1.60	7.68	1.92	2.95	3.43	4.01	1.56	0.83	3.09	41.93
1900	1.99	5.22	4.99	2.25	2.80	5.32	5.69	2.42	2.57	1.90	7.11	2.99	45.18
1901	5.98	0.97	3.06	6.13	5.11	8.77	8.59	8.03	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
1902	.....	...	.....	...	...	...	.....	...	3.69	...	...	...	.....
1903	.....	.....	.....	4.04	1.79	4.55	2.98	3.30	1.83	1.52	0.93	2.44	...
1904	4.11	3.10	.....	1.12	3.43	2.98	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
1905	.....	.....	3.27	2.07	3.91	7.57	8.25	2.60	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
1906	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
1907	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
1908	3/22	..322	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
1909	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1.59	3.31	1.90	3.34	.....
1910	4.32	2.75	0.59	2.50	2.67	7.38	7.09	5.58	3.56	2.03	1.14	3.63	48.23
1911	7.21	2.23	4.77	4.48	1.35	1.97	2.07	6.54	3.61	5.96	3.66	3.55	47.40
1912	2.46	2.80	6.12	3.17	4.52	3.45	2.67	1.88	4.56	1.53	2.18	4.20	39.54
1913	4.42	2.70	5.80	3.75	5.20	2.85	4.70	3.74	2.02	5.43	3.05	2.75	46.41
1914	2.51	3.19	2.54 4.58	4.58	1.54	2.37	3.73	5.22	1.75	3.70	1.10	5.30	37.53
1915	7.42	4.16	1.33	1.86	3.34	4.46	3.90	4.20	4.10	4.47	2.82	4.18	46.24
1916	4.09	3.51	4.48	3.10	3.72	5.32	7.17	4.78	4.31	1.90	1.75	3.38	47.88
1917	4.63	3.62	9.40	2.70	4.09	2.23	7.22	2.07	3.30	3.29	0.94	2.11	45.67

continued on the other sheet,

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Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
1918	6.44	2.98	6.51	6.50	4.38	10.11	4.62	5.60	4.73	6.64	1.92	5.18	63.62
1919	5.84	3.41	4.69	3.11	6.71	7.01	9.20	4.58	1.96	4.43	4.99	5.21	60.54
1920	4.03	2.78	5.04	5.56	3.05	5.53	5.24	8.90	3.40	0.80	4.75	4.37	53.45
1921	3.48	1.59	3.49	1.63	3.15	4.14	3.09	3.36	3.45	4.26	4.44	4.62	40.700
1922	3.28	5.49	6.13	3.33	5.19	4.66	5.34	6.57	0.95	1.67	1.01	6.26	49.88
1923	4.64	4.11	4.38	4.31	2.78	3.44	5.30	4.89	2.92	1.53	4.01	4.82	47.13
1924	5.26	3.41	3.65	3.53	6.49	4.54	5.06	5.85	7.68	0.10	3.11	3.75	52.43
1925	4.53	1.64	3.94	2.85	2.05	4.38	6.40	2.48	2.27	6.93	4.16	1.93	43.50
1926	4.93	3.94	4.27	3.08	4.57	3.10	7.03	10.56	3.00	5.44	3.60	7.40	60.92
1927	2.74	6.68	2.83	7.84	2.60	4.05	4.56	5.55	1.29	4.28	4.03	4.78	51.23
Means	4.08	3.50	4.30	3.45	3.97	4.74	5.31	4.90	3.10	3.11	2.93	3.88	47.27
Average Number Rainy Days.	11	10	10	11	11	11	14	12	6	7	7	10	120

Monthly and Annual Precipitation In Inches at Arbovale .  
 from 1924 to August 1940 no days missing.  
 H.S. Sutton Observer.

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
1925	1.63	1.64	3.16	2.05	2.83	2.68	6.67	1.23	3.14	4.78	3.36	1.24	37.37
1926	2.97	2.50	2.09	.48	2.84	2.39	6.49	6.85	3.00	4.23	3.16	4.76	42.36
1927	2.04	4.96	1.43	6.58	1.69	3.72	4.31	5.72	1.15	3.72	3.05	3.57	41.94
1928	2.22	1.81	2.36	3.50	1.59	7.15	5.01	4.73	3.18	1.53	3.43	1.54	39.05
1929	3.09	0.97	2.79	3.30	6.79	3.80	2.30	2.44	0.73	6.05	3.95	1.08	36.29
1930	0.76	1.74	2.00	1.96	1.09	2.72	1.48	1.95	1.36	0.50	1.63	2.43	19.62
1931	0.97	1.99	2.73	2.02	4.21	3.20	4.88	7.08	2.91	1.11	1.39	2.89	35.38
1932	3.73	4.42	4.10	1.80	3.64	3.63	6.41	2.31	1.34	4.17	3.62	1.86	41.03
1933	3.09	3.23	3.92	4.05	5.25	2.52	7.47	3.67	1.59	1.41	0.95	2.26	39.41
1934	2.06	0.00	3.15	2.00	2.40	2.83	2.10	3.37	5.77	1.23	4.65	2.08	31.64
1935	2.68	1.75	5.74	2.52	5.88	5.76	6.55	6.58	3.86	1.30	3.35	1.15	46.92
1936	2.17	1.23	3.30	1.55	2.29	3.50	4.83	2.32	2.84	3.78	1.02	3.92	32.85
1937	6.32	1.69	0.69	3.08	2.58	2.90	4.40	4.00	2.28	7.85	1.03	0.43	37.23
1938	0.89	2.08	2.28	1.78	5.41	5.10	2.28	1.93	5.48	0.65	3.93	0.65	32.74
1939	2.70	5.61	3.33	3.89	2.94	4.70	9.48	1.96	1.93	2.31	0.16	1.37	39.74
1940	0.79	1.72	2.90	3.48	5.04	7.82	5.11	4.37	...	...	...	...	31.23

NATURAL SETTING

Graph Showing the Annual Precipitation in Inches at Arbovale,  
from 1924 to August 1940, No Days missing

H.S. Sutton Observer.

Elevation 2727 feet from Sea level

Inches.

50  
45  
40  
35  
30  
25  
20  
15  
10  
5

1925 1926 1927 1928 1929 1930 1931 1932 1933 1934 1935 1936 1937 1938 1939 1940

